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ELLA:

Hello!

I'm Ella Montague and you are listening to My History Final, the show in which we talk little histories, interview friends, and hopefully get a passing grade.

Today I wanted to discuss the concept of burnout: what causes it, what it looks like, and how we can get through it.

According to the World Health Organization or who, Burnout is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace (or academic) stress that has not been successfully managed. More simply Mariam webster defines burnout as to cause to fail, wear out or become exhausted, especially from overwork or overuse.

Burnout is typically thought of in three different forms, Overload, Under-challenged, and neglect, however they ultimately all have the same effect: a lack of motivation and exhaustion. This can be coupled with feelings of negativity, trouble focusing, a decrease in physical and mental wellbeing.

In school, this typically leads to a diminished academic performance, including things such as skipping class or avoiding assignments.

We'll end today's episode with some coping mechanisms, and my own story but first lets jump into our interviews.

ELLA:

Okay today I am here with Zenga

ZENGA:

Hi

ELLA:

And we're going to be talking about burnout. So Zenga, my first question for you which is pretty simple is do you think you have ever experienced burnout?

ZENGA:

I think I have.

ELLA:

Okay what did burnout or what does Burnout look like for you?

ZENGA:

I think it's a lack of motivation towards things that I'm passionate about or just a general lack of motivation. I guess stemming from disinterest in the things that I'm spending my time doing.

ELLA:

Okay so then what would you say that some of those major contributors to your burnout are, is it just lack of interest in things or is it something else?

ZENGA:

I think it is, for the majority, I think it is a lack of interest in the things that I'm spending the majority of my time doing. I think particularly whenever you're in school you have to do a lot of things that you aren't particularly passionate about but you have to put a lot of time into and so I think that those activities are often exhausting but they aren't rewarding so you kind of end up feeling a little bit I guess purposeless.

ELLA:

That's fair

ZENGA:

It's a little bit dramatic but...

ELLA:

Yeah— So then just kind of stemming from that answer do you think that school has had a major or even had the most of an impact on your feelings of burnout?

ZENGA:

I definitely think so. I think that I haven't really felt burnout in other areas of my life but that it kind of carries over like from school, I guess.

Yeah that makes sense. So like. School kind of, school might be the largest contributor but because you're already burnt out from that it kind of causes you to feel burnout from other things as well?

ZENGA:

Yeah exactly.

ELLA:

Have you been able to or tried to combat your burnout at all?

ZENGA:

Not directly but I just I guess I tried to like take the time when I have it, like especially during the summer time, just trying to make sure that I'm focusing on spending my time doing things that I enjoy and I am passionate about.

ELLA:

Cool. Can you think of other ways that might be helpful for you or for other people combating that?

ZENGA:

No. I guess just having like a good like work-life balance. Making sure that you were doing both things that you're excited about and also things you need to do.

ELLA:

Do you think that your burnout will ever go away?

ZENGA:

I don't know. I think I probably need to address the larger issue of like why schools becomes draining for me and I'm not really sure what that is. So I think that if I put the time and energy into that I might but I'm not really sure how to start doing that.

ELLA:

Cool. All right thank you Zenga.

ZENGA:

Mhm.

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ELLA:

Okay, I'm here with Zeke. Zeke say hi.

ZEKE:

Hi

ELLA:

Zeke, my first question for you is pretty simple. It's do you think you've ever experienced burnout?

ZEKE:

Yes

ELLA:

Would you say that you're currently experiencing some burnout?

ZEKE:

Yes

ELLA:

Okay, in that case, what does burnout look like for you?

ZEKE:

I kinda just lose all motivation to do anything, regardless of whether that's school or a personal commitment. I just kind of struggle to get out of bed in the morning and do something.

ELLA:

Yeah, could you name or do you know what some of the major contributors to your burnout would be?

ZEKE:

It was really bad earlier this year, when I was trying to keep up with school and work at the same time. It was like too much going on. I'd be getting home at 10:30 and then trying to get homework done, while basically half asleep. And going to school the next day, not being awake enough to actually understand what teachers were trying to explain to me.

ELLA:

Do you think that school has impacted your feelings of burnout?

ZEKE:

I would say so. Especially with the compounding of like preparing for finals and AP exams in this past quarter. It's been pretty evident that some of our teachers are just as anxious as we are and that rubs off on us and so that anxiety kinda builds on itself.

ELLA:

Yeah. Have you been able to, or tried to combat your burnout?

ZEKE:

No.

ELLA:

Ok. So what are some ways that you could tackle it or could try to?

ZEKE:

That's a really good question, Ella.

ELLA:

Do you know of any ways that have helped other people? Or that you think might help you?

ZEKE:

I have done this thing before, not necessarily when I'm burned out but when I'm just struggling to get something done. It's this, there's this thing called the Pomodoro method, which is you take a period of like 2 to 3 hours and you segment it into 20 minute work periods and 5 minute breaks, and then you know after like four of those work periods with breaks in between you take a longer break and then you start over. And that has helped sometimes.

ELLA:

Nice. It's good to like at least try things, you know. Do you think, this my final question, do you think that your burnout will ever go away?

ZEKE:

Not fully. Like it'll get better and it'll get worse but you are never going to run out of things that you have to be worried about I guess.

ELLA:

Yeah.

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ELLA:

I'm with Charlie. Say hi Charlie

CHARLIE:

Hi.

ELLA:

Okay, the first question that I have is pretty easy pretty simple it's: do you think or have you ever experienced burnout?

CHARLIE:

No. Alright keep going that's not, that I'm not even meming, genuinely I don't, I don't really burn out. And I think it's probably I think I pace myself really well in a way that I try not to, or I, I understand my limits and I know how to not reach them.

ELLA:

Ok. Then, so if you don't experience burnout, what are some of the ways that you kind of avoid that, on top of what you just said?

CHARLIE:

I mean its, I make sure to I don't, I try not to do too much at once. If I, I'll do one thing and I say okay it's time to take a break and then we'll get to the other thing later. I kind of don't have a life so I've got a lot of time to work with, in terms of progress, and I don't for things that aren't, that don't have deadlines I don't put a lot of pressure on myself to get them done. Like I prioritize things with deadlines and things that don't have them are not as important to get done. So, I'm never doing too much, I don't think.

ELLA:

Okay. Do you think then that you could or will ever experience burnout?

CHARLIE:

Oh absolutely. Next year I definitely will. Because my neat fun strategies of like pacing myself are not going to work, when there's too much to do.

ELLA:

Okay, if you do experience that burn out then what are some ways that you might tackle that.

CHARLIE:

Well, probably not illicit substances but I mean I don't, I don't really know. We'll cross that bridge when we come to it but I imagine that I will probably just stop doing things for a while and then just try to technically pass all my classes???

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ELLA:

Archer say hi.

ARCHER:

Hi.

ELLA:

Archer, my first question for you is really easy, it's really simple.

ARCHER:

I'm ready. I'm ready.

ELLA:

It's, do you think you have ever experienced burnout?

ARCHER:

Yeah.

ELLA:

Okay. What does burnout look like for you?

ARCHER:

There's a lot of stuff and I just don't do it because I don't want to and I'm tired.

ELLA:

Fair enough. What are some of the major contributors to your burnout?

ARCHER:

Just the amount of things, not even the difficulty of them, just the fact that there's a lot of stuff to do and I've been doing a lot of stuff, so I don't want to anymore.

ELLA:

Yeah. Do you think that school has impacted your feelings of burnout?

ARCHER:

I mean obviously it's like the main contributor to it probably. And I don't even have a lot of work, so like I don't even think it's the schools fault that I have a lot of work; it's just you know the main thing I do in life. So yeah.

ELLA:

Yeah. Is there anything outside of school or like anything else that has impacted you?

ARCHER:

More recently, I've been getting more responsibilities and I have a job now and stuff. So yeah. There is definitely some stuff but school is probably the main.

ELLA:

Have you been able to or tried to combat your burnout?

ARCHER:

I think the only way you can combat it is by not doing anything for a bit. Which then you have more stuff to do but whatever, it's fine. So I try to but I don't know how well it works.

ELLA:

That's fair. Are there any ways that you think might work?

ARCHER:

I think if there was a system in place put by the school, I don't know what that would look like, but I think that would be the only reasonable thing, because like I said if I just were to stop doing work and it just piles up.

ELLA:

Yeah

ARCHER:

So like if there's some sort of system in place, maybe.

ELLA:

And then my final question is: do you think your burnout will ever go away?

ARCHER:

It depends you know because I could maybe get a really easy job in the future, I could sit around and do nothing all day and then I probably wouldn't have a lot of burnout. Or it could be the opposite. So I don't know. I think it really depends on whatever the future holds.

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ELLA:

As you can see, the majority of students interviewed believed that they are struggling with burnout, and those who didn't believe they had experienced it, thought that they would at some point.

My own personal battle with burnout has been long and treacherous. Starting off with mental illnesses started me off walking the line. After the shooting, that struggle became worse with the overall stress of pushing through loads of missed material. I pushed all assignments to the last second and then did more work than I could handle in a short amount of time. I became disinterested in my grades, and that became apparent. My approach to coping has been just to stop and not do anything, whilst doing things i enjoy. But the looming idea of work is always there. It also became noticeable that I wasn't the only one struggling. Even teachers were noticeably struggling.

As summer approaches, its important that we all take time to rest and rejuvenate. Instead of putting loads of work on our shoulders, enjoy the sun on them. When next school year rolls around we can better implement new ways of stopping burnout before it happens and combatting it when we are in the middle of it. Zeke provided us with one example of spacing ourselves out using the pomodoro method. But we can also seek out things that interest us, that we enjoy. Recognizing and asking for help when we need it. And as always sleeping, eating, and exercising well can be important to stopping burnout.

You've been listening to My History Project, the show where we talk little histories, interview friends, and hope we get a passing grade. I'm your host Ella Montague signing off

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